

CHAPTER 2

PHONEMIC SYSTEM

2.0. Introduction

In this chapter we will argue for some of the phonetic variations of phonemes that occur in the Yamba language. Within the consonant system phonetic variations are observed in both onset and coda positions; some of these will be discussed. In addition, vowels and some of their variations will also be examined. Most noun morphemes in Yamba are monosyllabic; therefore, the terms 'syllable' and 'root' may be used interchangeably.

2.1. Consonants

On the following page is a table showing a distinctive feature matrix for the consonant phonemes of this language. Some other phones, not listed in this table include w, x, and ʔ. These are predictable variants of the phonemes w, k, and t respectively. (See sections 2.1.3.4 and 2.1.5.) A number of different phonemes may be labialized or palatalized in addition to having whatever features that particular consonant regularly has. These two additional features, [+rd] and [+pal] respectively, are discussed in section 2.1.3 below.

h occurs only in a few limited environments. Discussion of it is handled in sections 3.3 and 5.1.

2.1.1. Distinctive Feature Table for Consonants

	p	b	kp	gb	f	v	m	t	d	ts	dz	s	z	n	l	r	č	ǰ	k	g	ɣ	ŋ	y	w	h
cons	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
syll	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
son	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-
cont	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+
vd	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
nas	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
ant	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
cor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
high	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
back	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
lab	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
low	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
delrel	-	-	-	-				-	-	+	+							+	+	-	-				
lat															-	+	-								

2.2. Vowels

The table below shows a distinctive feature matrix for the vowel phonemes of this language. In addition, there is the diphthong /aʏ/ which is a phoneme. The phonetic variations will be discussed in section 2.2.2.

2.2.1. Distinctive Feature Table for Vowels⁹

	i	e	ɨ	ə	a	u	o
cons	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
syll	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
high	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
mid	-	+	-	+	-	-	+
low	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
back	-	-	+	+	+	+	+
rd	-	-	-	-	-	+	+